

The Silent Stalker

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She was a woman of 63 years. She is shorter than average and stockier than the norm. She has blazing short brown hair, a light complexion, with tired brown eyes. She is often loud and brazen. She appears confident in her talents yet takes on others' personas. She is who you wish her to be. Most of all she is manipulative, disruptive, and a stalker. Her name is Shannon Glass Doherty, and she has been a stalker for more than 10 years, a silent stalker.

The victim is a 70-year-old pastor of a relatively large Christian Church in a small suburb, mostly a rural community. Father Daniel O'Malley arrived in this particular parish almost 10 years ago and she followed him there. He was a man of faith with a devoted commitment to his parish. A quiet, well-read man loved by his congregation. A man set in his ways yet willing to accept others with no judgment.

This is where this story begins and ends.

It was a cold winter night and Father was alone in the Rectory for it was a Wednesday evening. He was often alone on such an evening and enjoyed the solace it brought. It had been a busy day with morning Mass, confessions from the local religious schools, and visits to the sick. He made himself a cup of tea and relaxed with a book in hand. There was an anxious knock on the Rectory door. He hesitated to answer because it was late but felt he must. The voice was familiar, a parishioner he knew, and so the door was opened. As Shannon G. emerged into the room, the pastor noticed her state of mind. She was emotional, highly agitated, and unstable. She was speaking loudly, angrily and with much rage. Father Daniel knew she had such tendencies but had not seen such rage in her

to date. Although concerned he felt he could calm her rage. She accused him of leaving her for another. She began ranting and all his calming words and prayers did not quiet this disturbed soul. He kneeled down with her to pray when she sprung up and thrust a knife into his heart. It is not known as to how many wounds he suffered but there were many when all was done. She left him there to die alone.

How did we get to this after ten years?

This is the story of a silent stalker and a man that trusted her.

The year was 2009 and the annual Spring Concert was in full swing. It was always well attended by talented musicians and singers. The pastor of 25 years loved this concert and often was a part of it. He had a well-recognized and appreciated baritone voice. He had handsome features and a warm smile. Loved by his congregation, he felt he had found a home. This year the music director added a new instrument – a harp. It was a Celtic Harp played by a member of another parish. The name of the harpist was Shannon Glass Doherty. As she played her music filled the auditorium. How could such music be any less than angelic? So, Father Daniel approached her at the end of the concert with a glowing review of her performance. So, the scene was set. Having never received recognition for her efforts, least of all from a man of the cloth, was overwhelming for Shannon G. She found him handsome and gentle. From that day forward she saw only him. As the year approached the summer, Father Daniel was transferred to a new parish in a different county. What could Shannon G. do but follow Father to this new parish. Shannon G. felt he belonged to her. Not to God and not to any earthly woman. So, she watched his every action carefully. In the winter of 2009, Father Daniel developed a unique friendship with a female

parishioner. A sincere friendship that Shannon G. interpreted as much more. She held a hatred for the woman. Occasion after occasion she tried to destroy this friendship. She manipulated Father into actions against this woman. She manipulated those around her to isolate the woman. Years went by and the woman still stayed true to her friendships in the hope they would return, especially with Father Daniel. With time the latter did return. Father saw the kindness and generosity of this woman. He began to see the lies that were spun by Shannon G. He never confronted her but just did not believe her. Over time others were discarded in the parish by Shannon G. Some chose to leave, some were forced to leave, and some became ill. They were all women that worked with Father Daniel. The threats to these women were real yet Father felt they were just words, not actions. The one woman that stood by her parish and pastor, Father's true friend, was tormented the most. He cared about her deeply and knew she was in peril from hurtful words. He watched over her in the presence of Shannon G. He was her protector over the years. Shannon G. was relentless in her torture of this woman and the pursuit of her pastor. One day the woman did not attend Mass. Weeks went by and Father Daniel began to worry. He inquired only to find out that she had a close call to death due to a toxin she ingested. As to the source it was not known at first. With time it was discovered that it was Shannon G. The woman recovered after many months and return to her parish. Shannon G. was stunned to see her and immediately released her rage. As Father Daniel openly showed his joy in this woman's return, Shannon G. blamed the woman for her recovery. She was convinced the woman was seducing the pastor. In her mind, this woman was doing what she wanted to do. Yet the pastor did not

respond to her. A pastor in this faith would not respond to either party. Yet Shannon's mind felt she was the exception and this woman needed to be removed. So, she attempted again to remove this woman from all ministries, concerts, etc. She would befriend whoever spoke with the woman and she would influence their beliefs. She again attempted to hurt the woman with the toxin, but the woman was careful not to allow any opportunity. The woman was suspicious of Shannon G. and cautious around her. Shannon G. was desperate, yet highly intelligent. She knew a second more intense approach could cost her freedom, so she decided to resort to less definitive means. She would embarrass the woman and drive her out of the parish. She setup emails from the woman to Father of an inappropriate nature. These emails confused Father Daniel. It was hard for Father to believe these emails were from this woman. He was both embarrassed and disappointed. He could not respond to the woman and could not address them in person. The only recourse was to sever the friendship and avoid her. The woman was confused by his sudden coldness and avoidance. She confronted him with her concerns. Yet he did not tell her about the emails. He just told her she crossed that well defined line. She would not let it go. Shannon G. comforted Father and became his new confidant. For months Shannon G. was where she wanted to be. She had attained the closeness she could only dream of over these many years. The woman would not give up. The woman eventually convinced Father to tell her the truth. She proved to Father with an IT friend that the emails were sent by a third party, namely Shannon G. Father Daniel was quite upset. He confronted Shannon G. that afternoon and asked her to leave the parish. He told her if she was to leave quietly no one would need to know what happened.

It was this latter action that led to the events to follow, for Shannon G. would not leave. He belonged to her and no one else. She sent an email to the woman from Father's computer asking her to meet him at the Rectory. He has much to tell her. The woman knowing that her reputation was being attacked by Shannon G. choose to go. She did not respond to Father with a yes nor a no. She just said she would see what she could do. Shannon G. was happy because she took this as a yes. The plan was in action. The meeting was to be later in the evening without the knowledge of Father Daniel. Both would be together in the Rectory – the stage was set. Shannon G. was ready to proceed. She was to catch them together and use it to destroy them both. As the evening hours progressed her hatred for Father heighten. He was to blame as was the woman. Neither had a right to hurt her as they have. Sometimes fate or destiny interferes.

The woman was called by an ailing family member one hour earlier. She had to respond because it was important. She left for another's home. Father was alone that night drinking his favorite tea and reading when someone called. It was the woman's friend explaining the situation. He was confused for he did not ask the woman to come but he said they would speak when she returned. The call was brief since the friend had somewhere, she needed to be. Father perplexed picked up his cup, sipped his tea and resumed his reading.

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noticed her state of mind. She was emotional, highly agitated and appeared unstable. She was speaking loudly, angrily and with much rage. She told Father how she loved him for so many years. Not as a pastor, not as a friend, but as a lover. She told him that she envisioned a future with him. How she waited patiently for him in the hope that he would feel the same. She knew he loved her, but it was this woman that led him astray. Where is she, she screamed. Father had no idea and showed his confusion. This only angered Shannon G. more. She ran through the rooms in the Rectory looking for the woman. In her rage and delusional state, she was convinced Father was protecting the woman. Father tried to subdue her but to no avail. Father asked her to pray with him. She resisted at first but did as her pastor asked. She got down on her knees as did Father and prayed for guidance. Father felt in his heart that he was getting through to her. What he did not notice was that a knife was missing from his kitchen counter. That knife was in her hand. As he closed his eyes and continued to pray, she plunged the knife into his heart. It was almost as if he knew what was to come. His eyes remained closed as his body slumped to the floor. Shannon G. proceeded to execute her rage on a quiet body. When she was done, she closed her eyes and truly prayed for forgiveness from Father Daniel O'Malley. She took the knife and carefully wrapped it in a kitchen towel. She stared at the scene and smiled. If I cannot have him, no one will, she said out loud. "It is your own fault Father for betraying me! Did you really believe that I would forgive you?" Father could not answer her as he lay in his own blood. Time passed and she finally left the scene disappointed that she did not have a chance to face the woman. That would have to wait for another time.

It was morning and the congregation sat silently waiting for their pastor to arrive for Mass. He was never late, yet on this particular morning he was. A trusted parishioner unlocked the door to the Rectory and found the brutal scene. The police, the medical examiner, and the CSI team quickly came upon the scene. The congregation was in shock and disbelief. Their beloved pastor was slayed. How could this happen in such a quiet community? Who would slay Father during the night with so much rage? Why would someone do this? So many questions that waited patiently for answers.

In the Church sitting in the front as per her daily routine was Shannon G. She cried tears as she was told the news of Father's death. The parishioners comforted her as she did them. As the day progressed her mind drifted and she thought of her next step. If she could not erase the woman that made her do this act maybe she could imprison her for life. Yes, that would work well. All she had to do was convince a few parishioners that Father rejected the advances of the woman. She knew exactly who to tell that would pass it on to all. She would say that Father confided in her about this abomination. He was appalled as a celibate pastor and told the woman so. Shannon G. told all that would listen. Could it be her? Could it be this woman that Father rejected? She even went as far as to share her suspicions with the detective investigating the case, granting him the information. Her commitment to help was obvious to the parish.

The woman was away and did not know about the loss of Father Daniel. The investigators for the case of the slain pastor did find the woman sitting by the side of her dying mother. She had been there for many days in hospice holding her

mother's hand. Although her mother was in a coma, she would borrow her favorite novels from the library and read to her all day long. At night she would sleep in a chair next to her. She did not wish to have her mother die alone. She held her hand throughout the night even with discomfort. She would only let go when the medical personnel arrived. Now these investigators wanted her to leave her mother's side. Why this disruption? She could not leave her mother. Yet she was given no choice. She had no idea what had happened, and these officers were not forthcoming with the reason for their visit. They told her she must accompany them and answers a few questions. It did not seem unreasonable to the woman. Yet the process was predetermined. These investigators were already convinced of her guilt based on motive, but opportunity was not there. She had motive as per the statements given by the parishioners, yet she was 170 miles away in another state. She had many witnesses that saw her at her mother's side. Could she had committed the murder prior to leaving? She did contact Father before doing so, but from her home. The woman was not the last one to call and speak with Father. Almost one hour later before the arrival of Shannon G. and after the woman's departure, a retired Bishop, Father's dearest friend, called to schedule next week's dinner. They spoke for a few moments. Father Daniel was in good spirits and agreed to go on Tuesday evening for their dinner.

The woman drove quickly to the hospital for she was told her mother was unresponsive. The police were able to verify the time she was on the bridge/road with cameras. The timeline somehow did not fit. The investigators in this case could not find the opportunity. So, the case continued to be cold, and the woman was no

longer a suspect. This infuriated Shannon G. She needed to find a way to incriminate the woman. But how without involving herself. She still had the murder weapon and thought it must be the key. She wiped her fingerprints off the handle and replaced it wrapped in the towel. How to get this in the possession of the woman was Shannon G.'s focus. She needed to get into the woman's home and place it in an easy to find hiding place. The plan had its difficulties since the police had already searched the woman's home near the rectory and found nothing. Her car was also searched as was the area in and around the rectory/church.

So, Shannon G. had a brilliant plan. Hide the knife in a box and bury it on the property of the home of the woman. How would this work? Would the police find reason to search the grounds around the woman's home? What would propel them to dig around the woman's home? These questions gave Shannon G. many restless nights. She needed to end this soon so she could move on, but how. The woman had not returned as yet. Her mother was still in hospice and still alive. This worked well for Shannon G. She had access to the outside of the home and grounds and could place the murder weapon anywhere. Yet it needed to be easily found. Burying it would not be the answer. It needed to be in the open yet hidden. The house and her car were already searched. The grounds were searched. She needed to have placed the evidence there before she spoke to the police. Why did she miss this? Was she that determined to set the wheels of justice in motion that she lost track of what needed to be done? She needed a better plan. The woman had access to the Church, maybe that might be a solution. But where? There was a closet in the vestibule of the Church. It was filled with so many boxes, posters, and signs. The

new Lector's Workbook was arriving this week. It would be a box placed in the vestibule where many members of the group would access the new readings. Could the bloody knife appear there somehow? But how?

So, Shannon G., in her frustration and need to rid herself of the murder weapon, placed it quickly in the box and left out the back door. Just at that moment a parishioner realized that they forgot to pick up their workbook. They saw Shannon G. leave the vestibule and found the bloody knife amongst the books. They immediately called the inspector on the case and Shannon G. was arrested.

The rest played out for anyone found guilty of a heinous crime. With Shannon G. now gone the parish was at peace, but at a loss of their beloved pastor.